

April 4, 1963

REPORT ON 1792 HALF DISME SENT IN BY WALTER BREEN

Brassy copper color, appearing burnt in parts of field completely unlike color and density of disme in copper. Wt. 20-3/4 grains. Specific Gravity 9.2. (My equipment is not too accurate for small coins). Copper half Disme mentioned by Kosoff as possibly existing in his Illustrated History of U.S.Coins

Obv. characteristics

1. Dentils over space between CE of SCIENCE and & is unnatural and tooled, with artificial dentil cut in over &.
2. Dent of B of LIB
3. Dents and roughness over IB of LIB
4. What appears to be gas pockets from casting can be found (a) in field touching bust line and vertically in line with the left extremity of the bust; (b) in field next to tip of nose; (c) a group of tiny holes between IN of INDUSTRY and neck, one being just under center of I.
5. Three file marks on cheek, the top one being the longest and the bottom one being faint, all at 60 degree angle from upper left to lower right.
6. Planchet of coin extends beyond dentils from 2 to 4 o'clock.

Reverse characteristics

1. Area around F of OF is lumpy.
2. What appear to be gas pockets from casting can be found (a) one to right of crossbar of F; (b) four between M and E of DISME; (c) one between L and F of HALF; (d) one at dentil above space between O and F of OF; (e) one at right end of crossbar of F in OF.
3. Planchet extends beyond dentil ends from 1 1/2 to 5 o'clock.

Edge characteristics

Edge appears bright and golden, but matches edge on genuine silver pieces in every way.

April 4, 1963

Comment:

The density seems to be higher than that of brass and below that of silver. It could therefore be a mixture. This could be from a casting mixture or struck from a mixed metal planchet.

The brass color of the metal is completely unlike the 1792 Disme in copper which is deep red copper.

The weight adjustment file marks are never used on a copper coin and this creates a suspicion of the coin being a casting from a silver original.

If a cast this would only be accomplished by the lost wax or similar method of centrifugal casting because of its perfection.

The defects at the borders could have been caused by minor accidents in making the meltable positive or the original negative or the final mold.. The tiny holes in the coin could be gas holes from casting as I do not see how a struck coin could have them so placed or of such shape or size.

I do not know how a mold for casting could be made unless a rubberized matrix for the original negative was used as in dentistry. I do not know where the metal port might be but it could have been in the field and have been polished down to the level of the adjacent surface. The edge milling is quite perfect and one face of the negative must have included the complete edge if it is a cast.

The burnt brassy color could have been artificial darkening.

No xray testing has been done.

No chemical analysis by any method has been undertaken.

No pedigree of any type is available.

No electric resistance tests have been made.

No delicate specific gravity test has been taken, only a rough one.

No test as to plating has been made.

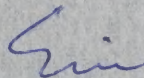
I have compared it to a genuine silver Half Disme and its obverse and reverse juxtaposition is normal as are the weaknesses in the reverse die.

Comment:(continued)

April 4, 1963

I believe an xray examination, chemical spectroanalysis, electricalresistance test and/or a highly accurate specific gravity test are worth while with respect to this coin. If genuine it is a major pattern rarity and if a casting the dawn of the most dangerous type of forgery ever known.

I therefore must reserve my opinion until more facts are available, but I have pointed out the characteristics which arouse suspicion and require study.



ERIC P. NEWMAN

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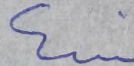
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ERIC P. NEWMAN

April 8, 1963

Mr. Walter Breen
2402 Grove Street
Berkeley 4, California

Dear Walter:

I enclose herewith, in duplicate, my report on the copper colored 1792 Half Disme which you sent me.

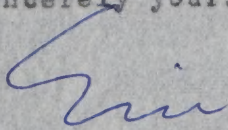
I would be interested in knowing your opinion after you have studied my comments.

I am enclosing a photograph of the coin and the coin is returned herewith.

It was certainly a pleasure to study it and I thank you for showing it to me.

I look forward to hearing from you about it.

Sincerely yours,



ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN/atb

REGISTERED AIR MAIL
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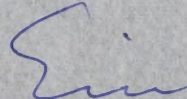
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REGISTERED AIR MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

March 28, 1963

Mr. Walter Breen
2402 Grove Street
Berkeley 4, California

Dear Walter:

I am very sorry that your dealer ethics article was turned down by Hewitt. I think Bradfield will also turn it down. I also think Amos will. Very few people have guts and some people are not in a position to assert their own guts because of their dependence on the whims of others.

I am returning the 1809 Half Cent which appears to be gold plated. Its specific gravity is 8.7 and the copper seems to show through.

I am returning the 1855 trial piece in white metal and see nothing wrong with it.

I am shocked at the 1792 Half Disme supposedly in copper. This thing is mentioned in Kosoff's Illustrated History which you cut up so well. I want to keep this coin a little longer to compare with another Half Disme and to obtain information from a dental supplier.

I have found a great many minute gas casting holes. It is impossible for them to be dense. I don't see how they could have resulted other than by casting. There are also a group of other defects on the coin. The mess around the & where artificial dentils have been cut in and the coin scraped and tooled may have a relationship to the casting web. I do not like the burned appearance as the coin has recently been cleaned and recolored. My weight, which can't be more accurate than a quarter of a grain shows 20-3/4 grains with a specific gravity of 9.2. Such a specific gravity is impossible for normal metal unless it is a mixture of copper, silver, and gold. Dentists use copper, silver, and gold in various proportions in their casting materials. As you noticed, this has a definite gold tinge rather than a copper tinge. The chemical analysis can be taken without damaging

-2-

March 28, 1963

Mr. Walter Breen

the coin but I am not in a position to do it. An x-ray spectograph would also be helpful.

This is just a preliminary report. I would like to know where the coin came from and I don't like it because I am afraid of it. As you said, you never come up with commonplace problems and, believe me, you have not this time.

Cordially,

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Cordially,

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EPN/atb

Dear Eric,

Sorry, but I returned the silver 1/4d forgery to Ford well before your letter arrived. I do not recall the die-alignment on this nor on the genuine; the latter might be checked by Ford against the Boyd coins. I own no Mark Newbies.

Hewitt turned down my article on dealer ethics. (7500 words--\$120 which I desperately needed: incometaxes, typer repairs, rent, phonebills, etc., all come up at once, and this would have helped somewhat.) In deepest disgust I quote some of the salient bits in his letter (my first rejection slip in 13 years!!!!!!) "How they ((i.e. NSM advertisers)) buy coins from general public is of no concern to me. ... I think the word professional is used in same sense in coin field that it is applied in sports and amusement. Its the difference between professional and amateur, that is a professional makes his living at the endeavor. It doesn't necessarily mean that he had formal education on the subject like doctors, attorneys, etc. ... After it ((i.e. the TAMS Ethics Committee code)) been published everywhere that will probably be the end of it...die on the vine. ... It ((my article)) would scare a lot of readers unnecessarily ((!!!!!!)) and retard their purchases from the magazine ads. 2. Cause a lot of unnecessary letter writing on my part from every Tom Dick and Harry that feels that some dealer overcharged him, etc." The above strictly sic, sic, sic--the spellings and grammar are Hewitt's own, not mine.

Needless to say, Lee has shown his true colors here, and he has gone down about 95 points in my estimation. The article has been sent to Elston Bradfield, and from there it will go to Coin World, and from there to Numismatic News, and from there probably to Numismatic Journal, if Lynn's parents ever let up on him enough to permit #4 to come out. I am more nauseated than I can possibly get across in print. Not just because of the rejection of a good article (though lord knows that is bad enough) but for the motives behind the rejection.

About the enclosures: The half disme was sent to me with the query "silver or copper?" Its weight is OK for silver; the color is peculiar and my own guess is that the piece is silver (note the adjustment marks, is that is what they are) and recolored to conceal border repairs. And is the edge g reeding artificial? If copper, its rarity is far greater of course. I have not way to tell, though specific gravity would of course enable a decision--but I have no equipment for taking sp.gr., and ANS would take a year to produce a result. So I send it to you.

Is the half-cent brass, gilt copper, or just curiously dis^{colored} ~~colored~~ copper? The ring is very much like copper; the weight is a little over 75 1/2 grains, which is a little light for copper even so much worn.

The triapiece of the gold dollar looks good to me, but I'm not as familiar with tin, lead, w.m., etc., as I should be, and I'd appreciate your opinion just in case.

Never say I come up with commonplace problems....!

best,

Walter Breen

April 16, 1963

Mr. Lew Walker
The Don Lew Co.
4419 Orange Grove Avenue
Sacramento 41, California

Dear Mr. Walker:

I have no reason to change my opinion on the 1792
Half Disme you sent me but was more interested in
finding out whether another specimen which was sent
to me thereafter could have been made from your
specimen. I am enclosing a photo of the specimen
I received after returning yours.

Please see if the overlap of the border beading is
the same on your piece as it is on the photograph
enclosed. You will note the extension of the plan-
chet beyond the beading on the obverse from 3 to 4
o'clock and on the reverse from about 1:30 to 4 o'clock.

I will appreciate your comments.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN/atb

Don Lew Laine Company

Reno - Sacramento - Los Angeles

DON THOMPSON

LEW WALKER

FRANKIE LAINE

4419 Orange Grove Avenue
Sacramento 41, California
916-IV 7-7588

April 13, 1963

Eric F. Newman
c/o Edison Bros. Inc.
400 Washington Ave.
St. Louis 2, Mo.

Dear Mr. Newman:

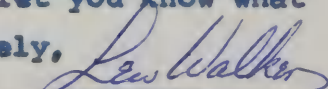
Must apologize profusely for the delay in replying to your letter of the 28th. With the tremendous paper work involved in keeping two sales, within two weeks, from becoming hopelessly confused, and the necessity for being out of town more than in, we just haven't been able to keep up with everything.

Be that as it may, would still have sent the Half Disme back to you, if it had been here, but it had been sent out for examination to a prospective bidder. Kept hoping for its' momentary return so that I could send it to you, but it was not returned until this week. Since we have to have it to show starting Wednesday, I hesitate to trust the mails with it again. However, if it is successfully bid upon, will show the new owner your last letter and ask him to send it to you. If there is any doubt at all about this coin, we certainly don't want a buyer to be unaware of the facts, so will make sure that he has them all.

Have not had a chance to talk to Frank about whether he acquired the Judd specimen or not, but hope to see him during the San Jose Show and will ask about it then.

With best regards, and will let you know what happens.

Sincerely,


Lew Walker

March 28, 1963

Mr. Lew Walker
The Don Lew Co.
4419 Orange Grove Avenue
Sacramento 41, California

Dear Mr. Walker:

I am embarrassed to write you that I would like to see the Half Disme again. I have had another one submitted to me from California and it looks like it may be a centrifugal casting. It may even have been taken from your piece. Although I have no reason to doubt your piece I would like to study it again.

I certainly wish I had the facilities to take an x-ray spectograph to determine whether it was struck or cast. Centrifugal castings with the use of the lost wax method are so dangerous that even my hair dresser can't tell.

I note that Frankie Laine is now your partner and wonder whether he acquired the Judd specimen of the Half Disme. If so, I would like to compare it.

If something isn't done about this forgery matter soon there will be complete havoc. I have written up a forgery of a St. Patrick farthing in silver for the May 1963 Numismatist.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

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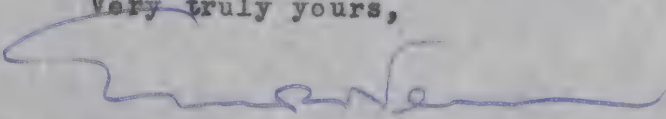
There is returned herewith the 1792 half Disme
which you submitted.

I telephoned you, as you suggested, indicating
that in my opinion the piece is genuine. I am
enclosing the findings, in duplicate.

There is no charge for this service but if you
care to make a donation to this organization
it will be used for numismatic photography,
microfilm, photocopies, research, and other
necessities.

We are glad to be of service.

Very truly yours,



ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN/atb

REGISTERED MAIL

March 14, 1963

A 1792 Half Disme submitted for examination by Lew Walker without pedigree weighs 21 grains, has 10.5 specific gravity and is in extremely fine condition for the piece. On the obverse the planchet extends beyond the dentils from 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 o'clock and on the reverse from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 o'clock.

This coin has been carefully compared with another specimen. The diameter, thickness, and weight correspond. The diagonal edge milling is perfect and corresponds. The obverse and reverse are not offset which is correct. The piece rings clearly and is struck strongly, except in M in AMERICA and the M in DISME which are normally slightly weak. A few superior pieces are known to me. The field is slightly rough compared to some other specimens which are smoother, but this is entirely possible because the silver used was used plate and silverware and may not have been remelted before rolling. The piece in my opinion is genuine. I have no information as to the pedigree and have not researched earlier coin sales in an attempt to find this specific piece.

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

By 

Eric P. Newman, President

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This coin has been carefully compared with another specimen. The diameter, thickness, and weight correspond. The diagonal edge milling is perfect and corresponds. The obverse and reverse are not offset which is correct. The piece rings clearly and is struck strongly, except in M in AMERICA and the M in DISME which are normally slightly weak. A few superior pieces are known to me. The field is slightly rough compared to some other specimens which are smoother, but this is entirely possible because the silver used was used plate and silverware and may not have been remelted before rolling. The piece in my opinion is genuine. I have no information as to the pedigree and have not researched earlier coin sales in an attempt to find this specific piece.

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ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

By Eric P. Newman, President

EPN
atb

DonLew Company

Professional Numismatists

DON THOMPSON

LEW WALKER

Reno and Sacramento

LEW WALKER

4419 Orange Grove Ave.
Sacramento 41, California

March 9, 1963

Mr. Eric Newman
400 Washington Ave,
St. Louis 2, Missouri

c/o Edison Bros. Stores Inc.

Dear Mr. Newman:

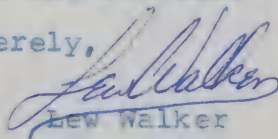
We would very much appreciate your expert opinion regarding the enclosed coin. It has just been returned to us by Dick Picker, who suggested that we seek your advice.

It purports to be a 1792 Half Disme, and from the few comparisons that we've been able to make, appears to be silver, about the right weight, etc., but because of its excellent condition, still leaves us suspicious. It has been consigned to us for our San Jose Sale, but even the owner admits that he does not know. Incidentally, that was also Dick's conclusion.

If you would take a few moments to examine it and give us your opinion, we'd be most grateful. Please let us know what we owe you for your service and we'll be happy to send you our check. While we do not need the coin immediately, we do need the information, so would appreciate it if you would call me collect at IVanhoe 7 7588 or 7592, office and home respectively, Area Code is 916, as soon as possible. We are trying to beat a Tues. March 12, evening deadline. Of course, if it is good, we would like to enter it in the catalog.

With many thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Lew Walker

LW/cb

April 16, 1963

Mr. A. Kosoff
P.O.Box 456
Encino, California

Dear Abe:

Thank you for indicating to me that the Judd specimen of the 1792 copper disme sold for \$5,000.00. I would very much appreciate a letter, on your professional stationery, to that effect, or, if you prefer that I have Bowers write the letter, send him the duplicate of this letter and I am sure he will do so.

Dr. Judd indicated he is going to Chicago for the convention and I am now thinking about it seriously. It is nice of you to encourage me to come.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

EDISON BROTHERS STORES INC.

400 WASHINGTON AVENUE • ST. LOUIS 2, MO.

ERIC P. NEWMAN
SECRETARY

April 8, 1963

Mr. A. Kosoff
P. O. Box 456
Encino, California

Dear Abe:

As long as the Judd specimen of the copper Disme was sold, I am wondering if you would be nice enough to tell me the price at which it did sell and its condition which, I assume, is uncirculated. — yes

This will merely be helpful to me on a valuation basis and will not be used for any commercial purpose or disclosed. I am sure Empire will have no objection.

\$ 5000.00

Sincerely yours,



ERIC P. NEWMAN

See you in
Chicago, I hope

Abe

EPN/atb

Please hurry reply —
a

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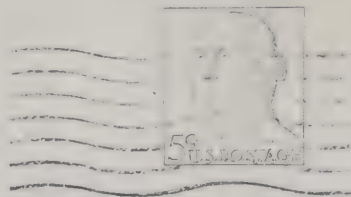
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St. Louis 2, Mo.

EDISON BROTHERS STORES INC.

400 WASHINGTON AVENUE • ST. LOUIS 2, MO.

ERIC P. NEWMAN
SECRETARY

April 8, 1963

Mr. A. Kosoff
P. O. Box 456
Encino, California

Dear Abe:

As long as the Judd specimen of the copper Disme was sold, I am wondering if you would be nice enough to tell me the price at which it did sell and its condition which, I assume, is uncirculated. *yes*

This will merely be helpful to me on a valuation basis and will not be used for any commercial purpose or disclosed. I am sure Empire will have no objection. *\$5000.00*

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN

*See you -
Chicago, Ill.*

(lib)

EPN/atb

Please keep reply -

April 1, 1963

Mr. A. Kosoff
P.O.Box 456
Encino, California

Dear Abe:

The second paragraph of your letter of March 29 has me confused. Dr. Judd did not own a 1792 Half Disme, in copper, I presume. I imagine you are talking about his silver piece which you point out could not have been available to make a casting. I fully agree with you that the casting could not have been made from Judd's piece under the circumstances as it is a tediously difficult job.

This coin I am studying has given me a shock. It is so gorgeous that I am beginning to realize what we are going to have to face in the future from forgers.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb



A. KOSOFF, Inc. *Numismatists*

- P.O. BOX 456 • ENCINO, CALIFORNIA
- STATE 4-5005 • CABLE AKOINENCAL, LOS ANGELES

March 29, 1963

Mr. Eric P. Newman
400 Washington Av.
St. Louis 2, Mo.

Dear Eric:

I have your letter of March 28th. First let me apologize for not responding to your previous letter concerning your T.A.M.S. committee work -- that is a subject that I would like to go into further detail with you.

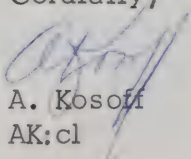
As far as the 1792 Half Disme in copper is concerned -- I am afraid that you are in possession of a specimen other than the one that Dr. Judd owned.

While it is entirely possible the copper piece you have was made from Dr. Judd's original, it seems unlikely because of the speed with which this coin changed hands.

The coin was sold by Max Justus to Dave Bowers, who in turn sold it to a collector who lives in California. All this was done within the space of less than a day as it occurred at a convention and until it was delivered to Max Justus I had it in my possession continuously from the moment I had received it with the rest of the collection of Dr. Judd's.

From that time until a week or so ago anything could have happened but I would say the odds would be rather heavily set against it being copied for the past ten days or so the coin has again reposed in my vault because of an arrangement with the collector on a matter involving a considerable sum. The piece, however, remains this collector's property. I hope this information helps you. Best regards.

Cordially,


A. Kosoff
AK:cl



M E M B E R

*Professional Numismatists Guild, Inc., International Ass'n. of Professional Numismatists,
American Numismatic Ass'n., American Numismatic Society, etc.*

March 28, 1963

Mr. A. Kosoff
P.O. Box 456
Encino, California

Dear Abe:

In your Illustrated History you mention that a 1792 Half Disme is supposedly in existence, struck in copper. I believe I have that coin for examination. It is a gorgeous thing but has certain minute defects that lead me to believe it is a centrifugal casting done with the lost wax method. Its specific gravity is wrong. It has a few tiny gas casting holes and it is one of the most dangerous pieces I have ever seen if my analysis is correct. Even my hair dresser can't tell. George Fuld's x-ray spectograph work, apparently, can determine whether a coin is cast or struck and this piece really needs that investigation.

There are two things I would like to know from you:

1. Where did you get your information as to the copper piece?
2. Is it possible that the copper piece was made from Dr. Judd's original? and would you tell me who owns Dr. Judd's original?

While Rome burns more and more forgeries seem to be forthcoming.

The Cleveland Numismatic Society adopted the T.A.M.S. Code and others are in the process. Naturally, there are gripes by those who want to continue the devilment.

Please let me hear from you on this Half Disme matter.

Sincerely yours,

bc
Dr. George Fuld

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis 5, Missouri

September 20, 1967

Mr. Virgil Hancock
Box 936
Bellaire, Texas 77402

Dear Virgil:

The 1792 Half Disme from which the rubbing was made is a crude fake. The letter punches differ from the genuine. The position of 1792 is wrong. The devices are copied in general but different in shape and size. Device punches were used and thus the devices would be the same in genuine varieties.

I enjoy your articles in The Numismatist, your nice comments about Virginia Culver, your popular program at the A.N.A., etc. Have fun in Chicago.

I gave my paper on forgery in Copenhagen and many were interested. It will be published shortly in The Numismatist, I believe. You will be one of the critical readers, I hope.

Thanks to you I wrote Alfred Dieffenbacher and he replied, indicating he didn't know how some of the fakes were made, but gave me data on Dr. Schmidt and other items I wanted.

Do you have a 30 to 50 power lens to see the grains of casting materials used to make cast coins? This would be most helpful in your work. I can't see them under a 10 power lens. You probably have younger eyes.

Kindest regards,

Sincerely,

EPN
atb

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EDUCATION SOCIETY

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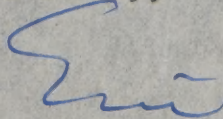
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Kindest regards,

Sincerely,



ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC
EDUCATION SOCIETY

EPN
atb



VIRGIL HANCOCK
BOX 936
BELLAIRE, TEXAS, 77402, USA.



Coins for the traders
of the world.

September 15, 1967

Mr. Eric P. Newman
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis 5, Missouri



Good Afternoon, Eric -

You I believe, Eric, are the one man whom I know who could give me an idea . . . not to be quoted, I assure you . . . as to the legitimacy of the 1792 half-disme of which I'm enclosing aluminum-foil pressings.

Among the many, many numismatic matters about which I confess complete ignorance, USA and Early American coinage certainly is one such field!

This piece isn't from the die pictured in Judd's PATTERNS, nor in Yeoman's Blue Book.

For such a short "run" as Judd indicates, I wonder if more than one die was whittled out.

Under 30-x stereo, the letters and the periods look as though they'd been engraved from blobs of metal dropped onto the field.

Also, Judd states that the edge reeding is supposed to be diagonal, whereas this piece has the conventional straight-across reeding, however irregular in spacing. Of course, for all I know, the diagonal reeding may have started with the first real production of the coins dated 1794.

At your convenienc, Eric, I'll appreciate your giving me a little education on this topic, and wastebasket the pressings.

Thanks a million, and all good wishes to you, Eric!

Sincerely yours,

Virgil Hancock
grm

Member, American Numismatic Association
Fellow, American Numismatic Society
Fellow, Royal Numismatic Society

Member, Asociación Numismática Español
Member, Sociedad Numismática de México
Member, Retail Coin Dealers Association

(Nicolas Jensen, master of French mint at Tours, copying type of letters established 113 A.D. by Rome's Emperor Trajan, in 1470 designed the type used for this letterhead.)

Dec 1968

from Virgil Hancock

Buch Cent

Wt 20 / gr

Sp gr 9.1

Belongs to C.A. Sunblad, C.A. Sunblad Agency, Inc.
112 S. Main St, Ishpeming, Mich.
If turned on vertical axis reverse is turned
20% counterclockwise

Edge reads weakly TO BE ESTEEMED * BE USEFUL

BIRCH is visible in lower part of letters

on Obv NT OF is very weak - other lettering strong

on rev UNI weak CA weak and
center design ~~unreadable~~ worn off
wreath almost invisible from 4 o'clock to 10 o'clock
Too very weak

Scratch \ from hair to mouth height on obv

Reading on obv 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock - balance of planchet

Reading on rev from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock - balance of planchet

Sold to Wild of New York

HARRY EDISON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

EXECUTIVE OFFICES: 400 WASHINGTON AVE. MAIL: P. O. BOX 14020, ST. LOUIS, MO. 63178

EDISON BROTHERS STORES INC.

EB